

Appl. No. 10/008,337
Amendment and/or Response
Reply to final Office action of 16 December 2003

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REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 13-16 and 18-24 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-11 were withdrawn as being directed to a nonelected invention, and are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter. Applicant(s) reserve(s) the right to prosecute the subject matter of the nonelected claim(s) in a divisional or other continuing application.

The final Office action objects to claims 14 and 20 as depending from a rejected base claim, but states that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim(s), etc. Applicant thanks the Examiner for this indication of patentable subject matter. Claims 14 and 20 having been so amended, withdrawal of the objection to claims 14 and 20 is respectfully requested.

The final Office action rejects claims 12, 13, 15-19, and 21-24 under 35 USC § 102(b) over DE 3743163 A1 ("Kerze"), English Abstract. Applicant(s) may respectfully disagree with the reason(s) for rejection given in the final action, but in order to facilitate prosecution and allowance of the subject matter the Examiner agrees is allowable, claims 12 and 17 are canceled and all remaining claims, i.e., claims 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 21-24, are put into condition for allowance by amending each of them to depend from allowable claim 14 or 20. The scope of the claims is not otherwise changed. Language in claims 23 and 24 is deleted only where redundant over similar language in claims 14 and 20, respectively. Accordingly, no new issue is raised and entry of the After Final amendment is proper.

Applicant(s) reserve(s) the right to prosecute subject matter of the original and previously amended claim(s) in a divisional or other continuing application.

In view of the foregoing, applicant(s) respectfully request(s) that the Examiner withdraw the rejection(s) and objection(s) of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is

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respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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